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T U E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- ◆ Secretary-General stresses need for "prompt concerted international action" to avert further aggravation of "serious humanitarian problem" in Ethiopia and its impact on neighbouring States.
- ◆ Secretary-General, in Nigeria, meets with Foreign Ministers of Algeria and Cyprus, and President of Sudan.
- ◆ Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordination (UNDRO) reports shortfall of over \$340 million for United Nations humanitarian operation in Persian Gulf.
- ◆ Secretary-General, in message on occasion of World Environment Day, warns against effects of climate change.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today through his spokesman that recent developments in and relating to Ethiopia had underscored the need for "prompt concerted international action" to avert further aggravation of the serious humanitarian problem prevailing in the country and its impact on the neighbouring States, namely Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan.

The Secretary-General said he was sending an inter-agency team immediately to Ethiopia and its neighbouring countries in order to assess requirements for humanitarian assistance and accelerate its mobilization and distribution.

In reply to questions by correspondents, the Spokesman said United Nations relief operations were continuing in spite of the "extremely difficult situation" in Ethiopia. Three local employees of the World Food Programme (WFP) had been abducted, and two of them killed, he said. An explosion that rocked Addis Ababa today had destroyed windows of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and 28 homes of staff members of the Commission, he added.

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The Secretary-General, who is in the second week of his three-week visit to Europe and Africa, had a series of appointments today in Abuja, Nigeria, with Heads of State and Government and other high-level officials attending the twenty-seventh summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

He met this morning with the Foreign Minister of Algeria, Sid Ahmed Ghazali, with whom he discussed the implementation of the plan for Western Sahara, the recently signed agreement on Angola as well as other regional African problems.

The Secretary-General then discussed the question of Cyprus with Foreign Minister George Iacovou of Cyprus. He also met with the President of the Sudan, Omer Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir, with whom he discussed the impact of the situation in Ethiopia on the Sudan, particularly on its eastern province.

This afternoon, the Secretary-General met with the Prime Minister of Senegal, Habib Thiam, with whom he discussed African economic requirements, Western Sahara, the Angolan peace accords and local conflicts in Africa, including the differences between Mauritania and Senegal.

He then met with Dawit Yohannes, member of the Supreme Council of the Eritrean People's Revolutionary Democratic Front and head of the delegation of Ethiopia to the summit. Mr. Yohannes briefed the Secretary-General on the situation in Ethiopia and they also discussed the humanitarian needs of that country.

The Secretary-General then met with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Mr. Arafat briefed the Secretary-General on the latest Israeli raids against PLO bases in Lebanon and they discussed the aftermath of the Persian Gulf crisis and the situation in the Near East.

The Secretary-General was also scheduled to meet later with the President of Kenya, Daniel T. arap Moi.

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) reported today that there is a current shortfall of over \$340 million for the United Nations humanitarian operation in the Persian Gulf. The agency said the funding deficit was having a critical impact on the distribution of food to Iraqi refugees and the provision of United Nations security guards to oversee their safe return home.

The Secretary-General has warned against the effects of climate change -- the theme of this year's World Environment Day, which is to be celebrated at Headquarters tomorrow.

(more)

In a message on occasion of the Day, he urged the Governments and peoples of the world to act urgently and responsibly to preserve and protect the natural environment. He said the effects of a global warming that would destroy the balance of nature would be truly disastrous.

Outlining the consequences of global warming, he said increased sea levels resulting from melting polar ice caps would inundate low-lying coastal areas and obliterate entire island States; rainfall patterns would be altered, increasing the frequency of floods and drought; famine levels would be pushed even higher than the already crisis proportions in sub-Saharan Africa; and tropical storms, such as the recent tragedy of Bangladesh, might become more frequent and more severe.

The Secretary-General went on to say that despite uncertainty as to the rate of global warming, decisive precautionary measures were urgently needed. The ongoing negotiations on a framework convention on climate change should contain specific commitments for stabilizing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency and conserving forests, he said.

He stressed that these commitments would have to be underpinned by a readiness on the part of industrialized countries to transfer additional financial resources and appropriate technology to developing countries to enable them to meet their commitments under the convention.

Lebanon has reiterated its call to the Security Council to take serious action to end Israeli attacks on its territory.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, Lebanon's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Khalil Makkawi, said the latest raid, committed yesterday, resulted in three deaths, seven injuries and extensive property damage. He called on the Council to implement a 1978 resolution which calls on Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon. His Government condemned the attack, calling it "a blatant act of defiance of international law".

In another development, Syria has informed the United Nations of increased Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, Syria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Dia-Allah El-Fattal, said the number of Israeli settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights now exceeded 12,400. He also said Israel was building new settlements where it was moving recent immigrants.

The Syrian Ambassador said the action was not only in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and various Security Council resolutions, but was also impeding peace efforts. He called on the United Nations to take the necessary measures to make Israel comply with international law.

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